

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell and Eliza Symonds Bell, June 3, 1880, with transcript

Letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to his Parents. Washington, D. C., June 3, 1880.  
Dear Papa and Mama:

Mary Horne's cheque was received O. K. Also newspaper cutting about "Seeing by Electricity." I am much amused by the anxiety displayed by scientific men all over the country — to forestall me in the discovery I am suppose to have made! What a lesson there is in it all.

The Telephone has taught me that an inventor must expect to have others lay claim to his ideas and inventions — after he has made them of value — but in this case — an indecent haste is made "to prevent monopoly" of an invention that has not been made!

I am absorbed in my experiments and am straining every nerve to simplify and perfect every detail before giving the Photophone to the world to be struggled and disputed over. I expect — as a matter of course — that half a hundred competitors for the honour of the invention will appear — and attempt to rob me of all credit. However I don't care. I have worked for the result and not for the glory — and I am happy in my triumph over the difficulties of the task I had set myself.

The articulation of my latest form of Photophone is as loud, if not louder, than the Blake Transmitter!!

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I am to give a private exhibition of the Instrument tomorrow afternoon (Friday) to a few friends — as I have no proper witnesses of my experiments here now that the Hubbards are away.

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Mabel and babies are at the sea-side at Atlantic City, New Jersey — but I have to stay on and work.

I intend to bring out the Photophone in August at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boston. Please preserve a discreet silence regarding the name of my new instrument. I do not wish it to get out until I announce it myself. The best thing that could happen is to allow the Curious to continue on a wrong track — in their speculations as to the nature of the discovery. I am longing for the time to come when I can disburden myself to the world — for I am anxious to commence work upon other ideas of an entirely different nature that are assuming importance in my mind. When the Photophone is once divulged — there will be hundreds of persons to work it up into practical usefulness — and I will then take “a new departure” in a different direction.

With much love.

Your affectionate son, Alec. Prof. A. Melville Bell, Brantford, Ontario. Canada.